

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

S E C R E T STATE 080377

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEATS PORT AU PRINCE 857 ACTION SECSTATE 31 MAR

QUOTE S E C R E T PORT AU PRINCE 0857

EXDIS

FROM AMXSSADOR

DEPT PLEASE PASS SANTO DOMINGO

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1 (DATE IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE)

TAGS: MARR MASS MILI PINS HA CU

SUBJ: HAITIAN CONCERN OVER CUBAN INTENTIONS AND PROPOSED
STEPS TO DEAL WITH IT

REF: (A) SANTO DOMINGO 1483, (B) PORT AU PRINCE 0727

1. AS WILL BE EVIDENT TO THE DEPARTMENT FROM PREVIOUS
MESSAGES ON THIS SUBJECT, THE REPORT PROVIDED TO AMBASSADOR
HURWITCH BY HIS MAAG CHIEF ABOUT DISCUSSIONS IN PANAMA
MISREPRESENTS BOTH OUR ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION IN HAITI AND
OUR PORPOSED MEASURES TO DEAL WITH IT.

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2. WHAT WE ARE FACED WITH IN HAITI IS AN INCREASED LEVEL OF

APPREHENSION OVER CUBAN MILITARY INTENTIONS IN THE WAKE OF THE ANGOLAN INTERVENTION. THIS CONCERN, OF COURSE, IS BY NO MEANS LIMITED TO HAITI AND HAS BEEN REFLECTED BY A NUMBER OF LATIN AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND MILITARY LEADERS WORRIED OVER THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THEIR OWN SECURITY OF CUBA'S RECENTLY DEMONSTRATED MILITARY CAPABILITY. HAITI, HOWEVER, HAS PARTICULAR CAUSE FOR CONCERN: IT IS CLOSEST TO CUBA, IT HAS LONG BEEN THE OBJECT OF CUBAN HOSTILITY, IT HAS SEEN NUMEROUS INVASION ATTEMPTS LAUNCHED FROM BASES IN CUBA AND OTHERWISE SUPPORTED BY THE CUBAN POLITICAL/MILITARY APPARATUS, AND IT IS CONSCIOUS THAT HAITIAN ARMED FORCES, SUCH AS THEY ARE, WOULD BE TOTALLY INEFFECTIVE TO DEAL BY LAND OR AIR WITH ANYTHING THE CUBANS MIGHT THROW AT THEM.

3. HAITIAN APPREHENSIONS ABOUT CUBAN MILITARY INTENTIONS AND CAPABILITIES HAVE BEEN RECENTLY EXPRESSED AT A HIGH LEVEL. THE FIRST OF THESE EXPRESSIONS, BY FOREIGN MINISTER BRUTUS, WAS STIMULATED BY THE DOMINICAN AMBASSADOR, GENERAL VALDEZ, WHO HAD JUST MADE A DEMARCHE ABOUT THE CUBAN THREAT TO HISPANIOLA. IN OUR VIEW, THESE APPREHENSIONS SHOULD NOT LIGHTLY BE DISMISSED, NOR SHOULD THEY BE VIEWED ENTIRELY AS A PRETEXT TO ACQUIRE ADDITIONAL WEAPONS, ALTHOUGH UNDOUBTEDLY HAITIAN WOULD WELCOME CERTAIN ITEMS OF MODERN EQUIPMENT DUTABLE TO DEAL, OR TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION OF DEALING, WITH A CUBAN ASSAULT.

4. WHAT WE HAVE PROPOSED TO THE DEPARTMENT IN ORDER TO DEAL WITH THESE APPREHENSIONS IS A LOW-KEY, INFORMAL BUT CONSISTENT AND HIGH-LEVEL PROCESS OF EDUCATION AND CONSULTATION. THE DETAILS WILL BE FOUND IN REF B. OUR AIM IS TO PROVIDE THE HAITIANS WITH A MORE REALISTIC AND SOPHISTICATED APPRECIATION BOTH OF THE CUBAN DANGER AND OF THE US CAPABILITY TO RESPOND, WITH THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE OF EASING PRESSURES ON HAITI TO INCREASE ARMS EXPENDITURES BECAUSE OF ITS GREATER PERCEPTION OF A SOVIET-CUBAN THREAT FOLLOWING THE ANGOLAN INTERVENTION. ANY PROPOSED MILITARY MOVES WOULD BE ENTIRELY OF A TOKEN NATURE, I.E., A SHOW OF JET STRENGTH OR AUGMENTED VISITS BY NAVAL VESSELS, AND WOULD BE CLEARLY SUBORDINATE TO THE MAJOR FOCUS OF OUR EFFORTS -- EDUCATION AND CONSULTATION. WE SEE NO GROUNDS FOR GODR

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ANXIETY IN ANY OF THIS, AND OF COURSE EQUAL TREATMENT IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS IS ALWAYS WISE IN HISPANIOLA.

5. I WOULD BE GRATEFUL IF THE DEPARTMENT WOULD REPEAT REF B TO SANTO DOMINGO.

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